

VZCZCXRO1885  
OO RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHPW  
DE RUEHNE #0354/01 0561204  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 251204Z FEB 09  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5499  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 1522  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 0490  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1546  
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 1025  
RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU 0080  
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 7199  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7402  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0442  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 5986  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3124  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 1480  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0662  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6112  
RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR 0128  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0175  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE VIENNA 0036  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 000354

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KZ](#) [TU](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: CICA SENIORS MEETING CALLS FOR MORE ACTION; TURKEY  
OFFERS TO TAKE OVER CHAIRMANSHIP

REF: ASTANA 265

Classified By: A/PolCouns Les Viguerie for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) Summary. The February 18-20 Senior Officials Committee/Special Working Group meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) included the usual litany of decisions taken on past agenda items and recommendations for future discussions, but was noteworthy for two encouraging developments: 1) a confirmation by Turkey that it is prepared to take over chairmanship of CICA beginning with the 2010 summit; and 2) a rather broad acknowledgment among members that CICA has done enough talking, and now needs to move into action mode if it is to remain relevant. Turkey's delegate to the CICA conference told Poloff Turkey will use its chairmanship to encourage greater interaction between CICA and the west, will look to the OSCE as model for CICA, and will be watching for signals from the new Obama administration on America's Asia policy so that it can assess how CICA might fit in. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Comment. While this most recent CICA senior officials' meeting didn't break any new ground per se, the Turkish offer to take over as chair of the group, coupled with the widely felt desire for the forum to become more action-oriented, offers hope that a new era for CICA may be on the horizon. In a sidebar with Poloff, Turkish delegate Omer Tuzel said his hope for Turkey's chairmanship of the group would be to make CICA more like the OSCE of Asia. Whether he and his colleagues in the chairmanship role can bring CICA's relevance up to the level of OSCE remains to be seen, but at the very least this first non-Kazakhstan chairmanship will serve as an endorsement of the group's broader focus and appeal. Asian states continue to search for a political architecture that is both inclusive and relevant. CICA still has a long way to go to meet those

criteria, but some members at least appear interested in pushing forward CICA as a meaningful pan-Asian forum. With Turkey apparently eager to both take on more substantive issues, and include western countries more in the discussion, the U.S. will have an opportunity to take on a more involved observer role, and can contribute to making CICA a more "meaty" conference. End Comment.

13. (SBU) Wrapping up two days of special working group and senior officials meetings, the Senior Officials Committee (SOC) of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia convened (with observer countries, including the U.S.) on February 20 to announce decisions made and recommendations for the forum's future. Kazakh Deputy Foreign Minister Nurlan Yermekbayev, Chair of the SOC, began the meeting by congratulating Jordan and the United Arab Emirates as new members and, introducing a theme that would be repeated by numerous other delegates, expressed the need for CICA to become more action-oriented, saying "The time has come for CICA to initiate actions." Yermekbayev described CICA's current state by saying "The conveyor belt has been constructed. Now the machinery sitting on the belt needs to be assembled and put to work."

14. (SBU) Indian Special Secretary Vivek Katju, as host, spoke of the diversity of CICA's membership and the inherent opportunity therein for approaches to regional security that don't apply to other fora. He called for more substantive action on previously discussed initiatives on drug

NEW DELHI 00000354 002 OF 003

trafficking, transportation corridors and energy security as engines for economic development. Taking a moment to look up from his prepared remarks to cast a gaze directly at the Pakistani delegation, Katju condemned the Mumbai terror attacks, and called on CICA to renew its 2002 call to eliminate terrorism, urging zero tolerance and a regional approach to fighting the common enemy -- extremists.

15. (SBU) Turkish delegate Omer Burhan Tuzel, after echoing calls for CICA to move from documents to action, announced (or more accurately, confirmed the February 13 announcement made in a letter between President Gul and President Nazarbayev) that Turkey had considered the April 2008 letter from President Nazarbayev asking for it to become Chair of CICA, and that it would be willing to do so, beginning with the 2010 summit in Beijing. Tuzel added that formally all Turkey was doing was putting forward its candidacy, and he invited other interested states, in the name of transparency, to nominate themselves. After a short discussion, it was agreed that the CICA Secretariat would ask for other candidates to identify themselves by May 1, and should no one else come forward, on that date Turkey's approval would become automatic.

16. (C) In a side meeting with Poloff, Tuzel stated that Turkey envisions a more ambitious chairmanship of CICA than the group had in the past. Turkey believes CICA can benefit by greater interaction with western countries, and would welcome the U.S. (and he also mentioned Japan) to use its prerogative to speak as an observer at future events. Tuzel will also seek opportunities for more substantive political issues to be discussed in future CICA meetings; not to raise controversy, he said, but to bring important issues to the table. Tuzel, the Head of Department for OSCE, Arms Control and Disarmament in Turkey's MFA, said he is interested in more political-military issues being discussed, and stated he sees the OSCE as a model that CICA could take on for Asia. CICA should not try to replace other Asian fora, he explained, but could do a much better job of complementing existing groups. Tuzel said he will be looking for signals from the new Obama administration as to how U.S. foreign policy in Asia will shape up, then will analyze how CICA might fit in. He believed that by having a country other than Kazakhstan -- and not just necessarily Turkey -- take over the CICA chairmanship, CICA will become stronger, and

will no longer be perceived as "just a Kazakh pet project."

¶7. (SBU) Several other delegations made statements similar to Yermekbayev's, with the Russians, Koreans, Israelis and Azerbaijanis all imploring CICA to focus more on substantive and action items. The Chinese delegation reminded the committee that Beijing will host the next SWG/SOC in October.

¶8. (SBU) In his report, Executive Director Dulat Bakishev highlighted the work the CICA secretariat had taken to amend draft protocols to CICA rules of procedure and discussed several other in-house measures aimed at strengthening CICA's procedural processes. But by noting that the Conference still suffers from a lack of voluntary contributions from members, as well as reporting "that there has been no real forward movement in the last six months towards the implementation of Confidence Building Measures," (with one exception), the Executive Director's report also exposed one of CICA's biggest criticisms (described in reftel) -- that CICA is still in its infancy, focused more on structural issues than substantive actions.

NEW DELHI 00000354 003 OF 003

¶9. (SBU) The SOC meeting ended with the consideration of two main business items. First, the group adopted a concept paper on "Cooperation Among the CICA Member States in the Area of Tourism," a rather general document whose purpose is to "provide ground for adoption of an Action Plan which will reflect concrete events." Second the SOC announced it had agreed to all nineteen of the SWG's recommendations, the bulk of which seemed to focus mostly on agreeing to look at further studies and follow-up reports, as well as address some of the Secretariat's operating needs. In bringing the meeting to a close, Yermekbayev went over the CICA calendar for the remainder of 2009, highlighting the next SWG in Almaty in June, and the SOC in China in October.

WHITE